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ABSTRACT

This booklet focuses on interpersonal techniques that two-career couples can use to boost their careers, organize their lives, and enhance their relationships. The guide begins by outlining expected traits of career-oriented women and commenting on the social changes that have made careers desirable for more women. It mentions the differences between men and women in how they choose a career and discusses the influence of motherhood on women's working lives. Possible two-career paths are described: working for the same employers, self-employment, and working from home. Areas of interpersonal competence are discussed, such as role balance, complementary skills, sacrifices, and marital stability. The guide lists skill requirements for dual-career couples and suggests counseling to set goals and improve communication between the partners. A list of discussion topics is provided. Recommended reading includes 13 publications on dual-career families, 11 on the female career perspective, 2 on the male perspective, and a guide to child care in Australia. (KC)

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STRATEGIES FOR DUAL-CAREER COUPLES

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STRATEGIES FOR DUAL-CAREER COUPLES

The to successful dual-career families is making to sit down and discuss issues BEFORE they become problems. Neither person should feel a is being held to their head.

Some find their commitments so demanding they fail to communicate adequately. Most could profitably turn off the and talk to each other over a .

Life is not all , but it should not be a like a firecracker either. By planning, instead of relying on , you can avoid many stressful situations. And what is needed are solutions, not a !

We define a family today as a social unit of two or more people living together. They share a common destiny which should encourage each to consider the other when making career-related decisions. The couple may be of different sexes or the same sex. Each family unit develops a pattern for meeting the income-earning needs of its members. How to evolve a pattern satisfactory to both partners is the difficulty.

New patterns of living have brought about a new set of problems. The trend towards more egalitarian, sharing kinds of partner relationships is demanding complex career management strategies to ensure both parties fulfil their particular worklife ambitions if the partnership is to remain stable. The cost of career-related individuality should not necessarily be an increase in partners' separating or our divorce rate.

Recognition of dual-career family situations tends to focus on women and how they cope. In Australia this is reflected in the nationally distributed monthly magazines, *Portfolio* and *Ita*,

containing advice about combining work and family roles. In contrast, little exists in published form to advise the man. This publication has the objective of helping adults of both sex integrate family and career roles in ways that are satisfying to them and other family members.

Choosing a Partner

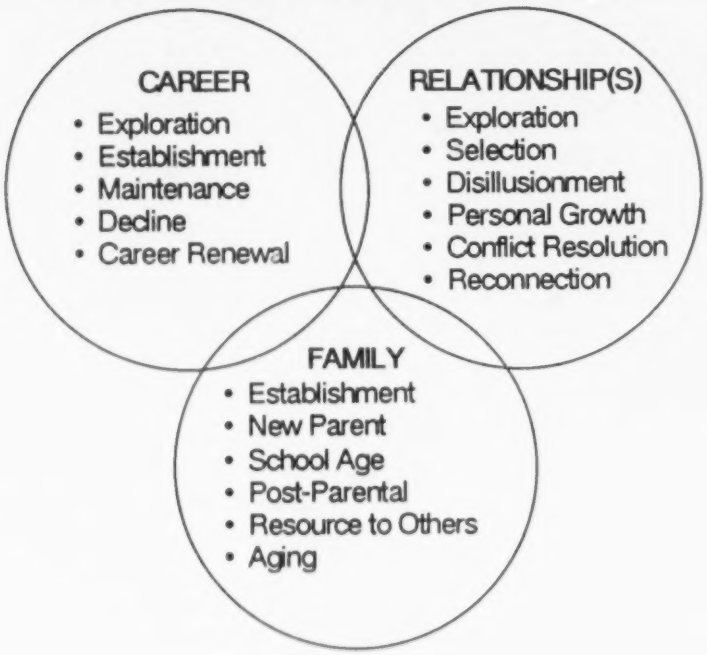
Can dual-career situations be anticipated? As serious as personal career management is, I would view it as a shame if partners chose each other predominantly on the basis of regard for current or potential occupational status and/or income. The time-honoured basis of choice—personal characteristics of attractiveness and caring—while still precarious, is a special part of life's journey and decision making.

But beware the predatory male who has discovered Rapoports' studies (1969 and 1976) of dual-career families, where the characteristics of career-minded women were claimed to be identified. In the interests of fair play between the sexes—and because I am a romantic—I am listing them as a warning:

- Career-oriented women come predominantly from small families
- They tend to be the only child or first born
- Circumstances created a pattern of some loneliness in childhood
- Level of tension in family upbringing environment was higher than is usual
- More likely to have had mothers who enjoyed working, or were perceived to be frustrated in their domestic situation
- They had a conspicuous figure of strength, e.g. grandmother or father, with whom they had a close relationship

My own concern, when one chooses a partner, focuses on childhood social conditioning and early adult experiences which produce ideas of masculinity and femininity (sex-role concepts).

The Three-Ring Circus:
Stages in Career, Relationship and Family
(including Expected and Unexpected Events)



These concepts can limit and inhibit either or both partners in their search for personal fulfilment through the pursuit of their careers.

Variables that help predict men's career decisions (interests, aptitudes, career maturity) are less useful for predicting women's career decisions. One factor is occupational stereotyping or common views of whether occupations are appropriate for men or women. My counselling work with female clients indicates that there is a tendency for women to be one of three groups of characteristics:

- Internalisers who set their own career goals
- Identifiers who set goals based on the influence of significant others
- Compliers who have no career goals and select worklife options, in a reactive manner, as life events evolve

Many issues need to be explored before either person commits to a dual-career family situation. The new egalitarian pattern of occupational choice will be inhibiting for some, for others liberating. The central issue remains one of feasibility, commitment to sharing responsibilities—and the frank exchange of viewpoints by both.

Social and cultural forces have changed substantially, with greater recognition of the **right** of both partners to develop their own careers. Consequently, success and satisfaction in dual-career family situations will ultimately rest on the specific values of each partner and the resultant core of shared values. These can, I believe, be discovered and explored while courting takes place!

Social Change

Women born after World War II have been taught to view paid work as much more central in their lives than it was for their mothers. Many now build their lives around their careers rather than consider work a time-filler before or after children or a means of supplementing their partner's income.

In 1968 only 38% of working age women were employed in Australia. This had risen to 44.8% in 1983. January 1989 figures showed the corresponding figure being 51.3%. Of married women with dependent children, 56% are in the paid work force. There is a clear trend towards more consistent, long-term participation by women in work.

Sociologist Pamela Daniels warns of the risks for women who live through the career dreams of their husbands, lovers and children. Women need their own dreams, she says: '...the self-verification that comes from meeting the challenge of chosen work'.

But, she cautions, often women don't dream, they drift. Women's careers are often unplanned, accidental. What starts out as just a job blossoms into a career, part-time becomes full-time, someone suggests you do a degree or a Ph.D. But a good dream, according to Daniels, can see women through unpredictable life events, giving them not only a sense of who they are, but what they dare to be. 'Women are learning the value of a dream.'

The research of Daniel L. Levinson of Yale University is useful on this subject. According to Levinson's studies, the personal success and happiness of the adult male depend on how well he achieves his dream or adapts it to the circumstances of his life.

Bettina Arndt, Australian author and sex therapist, comments:

> We long to be masters of our own destinies and increasingly resent the unavoidable drift in our lives. We are jealous of what we see as the power of men to pursue their Dreams without the conflicting demands of running a home and caring for a family which bogs us down and clutters our minds.
>
> But in envying men their Dreams we rarely think about what our lives would be like without the chance to drift. We don't think about what happens to a man's life when a Dream turns sour; when he's locked into one Dream, one path, and discovers it's not for him.
>
> For the family man there is no drift. The man who takes on the responsibilities of provider is often locked into his Dream whether he likes it or not.
>
> The manager longs to start his own business but can't afford the drain on the family finances of starting again. The man chooses law as a stepping stone to politics and then, with a family to support, settles for security.
>
> So, few men have access to options now opening to women—mid-life re-training, years spent studying, producing no income.

Thomas Carlyle, the 19th Century Scottish writer, expressed well the importance of meaningful work in a person's life and used the male pronoun as was the convention of that time to say, 'Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it.'

Procreation

I have been struck by a metamorphosis of thinking among women whose careers are going well. As they become more self-confident in their skills and worth, negative feelings about

having children (interruptions to their careers) seem to abate. In many cases, there also emerges a desire to pass on their occupational experience and knowledge to the next generation—their own children.

Does motherhood automatically alter priorities? A recent US survey among 4 900 women included an analysis of what a baby does to a mother's career. A surprising one-quarter found that having a baby had no effect on their career; in fact, 27% reported taking on a more challenging job. 15% did switch to less demanding work. And for more than a third, motherhood meant slowed career advancement.

Another survey of 70 000 American households has found that the more successful the women's careers the more problems they have getting their personal lives and careers together.

It may well mean that men are continuing to make unrealistic demands on well-educated, career-oriented women—demands which they themselves would resist. This may explain why many women are not marrying.

Tertiary Education Study

Both male and female members of dual-career couples in great numbers are struggling to gain the education they missed in their teens and 20s—most by part-time, fewer by full-time attendance. For them the domestic and academic timetable is a gruelling one. The conflicts between the myriad demands on each individual's time and energy give rise to conflicts which can lead to guilt, tension in relationships and debilitating stress.

The motives for setting these formidable schedules vary. The most obvious one is investment in preparing for a new job, a career change or return to the work force after an extended absence. Other motives can be dissatisfaction with the domestic role and its status in society, the need for respect from immediate or extended family members, or the search for personal identity. For some, the joy of new learning is the primary motivation.

Mature age students rarely take time to reflect on and discuss with their partners the reasons they are undertaking their studies. However, such discussion is important. It gives the

student an opportunity to allay the fears of their partner who may feel threatened by the pursuit of higher education, for both intellectual and status reasons. Such discussions may also lead to successful negotiations ensuring more sharing of household chores.

Becoming a self-determining individual by taking up advanced education studies does alter the relationships between the student and those they care for and are loved by. Communicating the triumphs, failures and difficulties of the endeavour is critical to avoiding the deterioration of these close relationships. Waving a transcript of examination results twice a year will not suffice to ensure the continuing, appropriate and necessary support from the partner.

> ☛ If you are to study successfully you must share your experiences regularly and thoroughly

Working for the Same Employer

Lisa Mainiero, Professor of Management at the School of Management, Fairfield University, argues that dual-career partners can be beneficial—and should be encouraged—working for the same employer:

> It's very simple. The problems arise when it is a hierarchical relationship, that is, a boss and a subordinate. Staff get upset. It creates an atmosphere of resentment and mistrust. Staff fear the boss will favour the lover and the subordinate will exploit his or her power over the boss and use the relationship for professional gain.

But when the relationship is between two people on the same career level, Professor Mainiero is optimistic about the effect on other employees:

> Lateral relationships had very positive benefits on staff morale and production. People were enthused and happy to see their colleagues getting love.

In one case, a male manager had a very authoritarian style. He fell in love with another manager on the same floor. She acted as a liaison and communicated the staff's feelings to him. As a result, he changed his style and the whole office prospered.

In another case, two colleagues were working on an urgent merger. It was an intense task, with a close deadline. Because they were in love, they spent much of their personal time discussing work, and increased their production.

The positive findings about working for the same employer, however, don't include extra-marital affairs. There is still a strong conservative streak in most people. If one partner is already married the other not, many staff are disturbed and react negatively.

Career Plateau

The pressure on dual-career partners can be particularly marked when either, or both, experience a career plateau.

Women who combine marriage, maternity and a career are less vulnerable to this form of stress. Their psychological investment in their career is less, because they are not dependent on work as the major source of their self-esteem.

Nevertheless, while these women are less likely to feel as angry as unmarried women when their careers plateau, the quality of their home lives may still be affected by their situation at work.

Both men and women are likely to question the value of how they have spent their lives when they realise their career has plateaued. The chances are that women will recognise that the cost of past success was not, as it can be for men, a less fulfilling family life. For career-minded women without partners, the cost of no family at all can be a potentially devastating realisation when facing a career plateau.

At some stage all careers will plateau. Promotions usually end long before we retire. Careers can plateau in two ways. One is the structural plateau where further promotions seem unlikely,

either because of the nature of the organisational hierarchy or because the individual is no longer regarded as promotable.

The other is more frequent. This is when a job content plateau is reached. This occurs when work content doesn't change much. It neither challenges nor requires anything new to be learned. The stimulus for attending work is deflated.

Neither situation is usually addressed openly by employers nor is constructive counselling provided. We have to diagnose for ourselves the clues that our careers have plateaued—either temporarily or permanently. And learn how to cope or change the situation.

We are brought up to believe that adult life is a series of expected events. When we realise that our career has plateaued, this belief is disturbed. In reality, life is a crazy paving of expected, unexpected and non-events summed up well by Perth-based lawyer and author, Nicholas Hasluck who wrote in *Truant State:*

> The pattern which constitutes a person's life is always intricate, a network of odd connections, family ties, friendships, animosities, achievements, follies, tragic insight and belated comprehension, a cloth of densely woven days, a quilted landscape crisscrossed by thoroughfares from highways brisk with hourly traffic to streets and footpaths used intermittently; a landscape containing, also, overgrown but crucially important tracks, lines of secret strength, seldom used, perhaps, but avenues upon which we often feel we are most ourselves: a tunnel curving through the silent foliage to distant crystal point of brightness, a place in which our hard-won lessons seem to coalesce, a place in which we feel the tremor of the past and of the future, a truant place where we arrive not at what we should do, but at what we want, at what we are.
>
> There is so much to be discovered, in every life, in every group—an unwritten chronicle of desires and involvements, buried layer upon layer like the remnants of successive cities, ancient stones.

☛ A career plateau can prompt actions leading to an interesting, new and revitalised career

Self-Employment Ventures

There is considerable evidence of an increase in dual-career partners embarking on entrepreneurial careers by buying or creating small businesses. Contributing factors are many, but those of redundancy, job dissatisfaction and the development of new technology are prominent.

Many are attracted to self-employment because of unsatisfactory experiences in their workplace. In medium to large organisations, the way work is broken down and allocated causes tasks to be differentiated and the ensuing hierarchy creates distance between people. This leads to an increasing feeling of powerlessness as employees are unable to discern the impact of their efforts at work. These and other motivations stimulate people to take on self-endeavour ventures where they can see the results of their personal efforts.

It is interesting to note that women are estimated to constitute almost 25% of Australia's entrepreneurs—a figure which indicates we may be following the American trend where women are starting businesses at five times the rate of men and where in 1985, 75% of sole-proprietor businesses begun that year were owned and operated by women.

☛ Self-employment can result in considerable rewards in terms of personal satisfaction

Role Balance

There are many women entrepreneurs whose efforts underwrite those of their family partner. A host of male-owned enterprises are formed and grow with the support of female partners, either paid or unpaid. Without the spouse's contribution many new businesses could easily fail.

Here the important factor is to ensure that the female is a full and legal partner rather than merely has a secondary, subservient role in the business. Flexibility is needed by both to establish the working relationship which best combines individual talents. A frank appraisal of each other's skills and

the needs of the business operations is important to ensure that the risks to be taken are worthwhile risks in such a venture. In the USA an organisation has been established for couples running small businesses called the National Association for Entrepreneurial Couples from which useful advice may be obtained. We need a similar forum for the sharing of experiences in Australia.

Women frequently leave their jobs to support the small business endeavours of their partner. This may be precipitated by the partner's loss of employment or result from a desire to share his striving for achievement free of employment restraints. The burden of the female role in such circumstances is daunting. While he devotes his unfettered energy and time to their supposedly mutual enterprise, the woman copes, in addition, with domestic chores and child rearing with little or no help. Balancing these demands often produces tension and raises questions as whether the effort required is worthwhile. In addition, the woman's frequent lack of management training and understanding of finance regrettably makes for even less egalitarian partnerships.

Women's dedication, loyalty, energy and tolerance is usually strong. Yet I have found that it is common for such women to say that these arrangements have rejuvenated their relationships as both strive in a common endeavour. Sharing the ownership of a business is frequently perceived as a way of combining work with household management and a means of strengthening partner relationships.

Others, however, reflect wistfully on the past when their partner left early for employment and returned in the evening, and miss the time they had to themselves.

A Complement to Each Other

Partners who possess complementary skills are critical to making any small business relationship work. My wife Peggy and I run our business as a private company. I handle the counselling, consulting, writing and marketing requirements, Peggy administration and finance. Each of us is aware of our own domain and specific role.

If Peggy criticised one of my manuscripts strongly I'd react negatively. But if she re-arranged our finances I would accept it. You can't operate in isolation when two partners are in their own business together, but if you interfere in each other's area of personal skills you'll get very annoyed.

I have found that being involved in different spheres of the operations also gives us 'breathing time'. Although working from the same office, we may spend hours without seeing one another. During working hours the roles are so clearly defined that it is strictly business.

Business matters are necessarily a subject of discussion at home but disagreements are sorted out at the office in a businesslike manner. Peggy cites the example of an investment I agreed to without consulting her. Instead of debating with me at home, she researched the figures and proved to me on paper at our office why it was not a well-considered action.

We have experienced a change in our social life since starting our business. Many of our new friends also own businesses and corporate life has become a separate, distant world for all of us.

Most problems occur with dual-career couple enterprises when two people with similar skills have gone into business together. It can be a recipe for disaster. For example, if the couple were two creative designers, who would do all the administrative fundamentals?

> ☛ To avoid conflict, make sure your business and administrative skills complement each other

Corporate Refugees

Being deprived of stimulation at work often causes people to start their own businesses—some because of their low-skill demand, low-paid occupations, others because of resentment towards other forms of subordination, such as where there are others directing the way their work is carried out.

A conscious attempt to combat or remove themselves from close supervision is the primary motive for many. Their quest is to experience a sense of self-fulfilment which they believe is unattainable within employment environments.

Self-employment is sometimes seen as a way of generating income more quickly or escaping oppressive supervision. Many also perceive their entrepreneurship as a vehicle for less inhibited self-expression.

Sacrifices

Owning a business is a career management strategy which exacts a formidable price. The preoccupation with surviving, growing and then perhaps growing further has implications for the ways in which such entrepreneurs order their lifestyle and time allocation. Business often comes first and other relationships and interests can readily become subordinated to it.

The 'female qualities' of caring, understanding and sacrifice can be swallowed up in the management of the business. Many women have chosen self-employment in preference to marriage; others have found they have insufficient time to become involved elsewhere in non-career activities.

Friends, lovers, relatives and personal development can be neglected, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness. As some have said: 'My business is more than a career; it's a lifestyle.' Within my counselling practice such women have talked over with me how they believe they are perceived as odd or unusual by other women and many men. This, in turn, propels them to devote even more time to their entrepreneurial endeavour, thereby deepening the estrangement.

People in this situation are ignoring the wisdom of Margaret Fuller who wrote in *Summer On The Lake* 'People for the sake of getting a living often forget to live'. And that was written in 1844!

Nevertheless, identification with your own business is rarely other than intense and seldom regarded as unimportant. 'It's you—your character, your personality, which makes it' one person said to me.

Many people go into business after certain family demands have diminished, such as child rearing. However, owning a business does not necessarily lead to a re-structuring of conjugal roles, and this can result in long hours of work for the woman within the business and home.

For them, business ownership means continuing traditionally defined female roles of housekeeping, cooking, and ironing. Yet a strong yearning for personal identity and recognition characterises such women. They see their businesses as vehicles for extending self-esteem and an opportunity for measuring the results of personal effort. It gives them a sense of value apart from a emotional relationship with their husband or de facto partner.

> ☛ Don't allow your business to take over your whole life

Psychological Prerequisites

Defining what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur is no easy task.

The much touted claim that assertiveness, determination, ambition and ruthlessness are attributes normally associated with men—and women have to learn them—does not stand up when one considers female entrepreneurs who make the transition to self-employment. There are many, for example, in advertising, market research, computing, financial consulting and publishing. Few would deny that assertiveness and determination are integral to success within these industries.

The stimuli to take on a business venture depend on the extent to which women differ in their views of traditionally prescribed roles for their journey though life. Shifts in social and personal preferences are influencing many. Some are propelled by necessity and economic survival. Others make the transition to self-employment with considerable forethought, research and an audit of the potential rewards and penalties. Others have inherited a set of values such as self-determination from the

self-employment pursuits of parents, close friends or other role models. Many set out seeking to use their creativity in a less restrained way.

All have a form of 'gutsiness', a persevering nature and a belief in their inherent practical skills. They enjoy expressing their individualism. Above all, they are rarely naive.

Working From Home

The idea of working from home has popular appeal. Many dual-career couples embark on such an arrangement with either one or both members setting up a 'home-office' environment. There are advantages, such as short commute to work, often a liberal dress code(!), the ability to multi-task work and household activities concurrently and some quality of life bonuses.

But dual-career couples contemplating such ventures would be wise to carry out one or more research interviews with people who have already made such a career transition. On the less attractive side, you are likely to find evidence of loneliness and isolation, the constant need to be self-motivated and the 'ever-present job' feelings where work and home life are in the same location.

> ☛ Check thoroughly before you decide on a career re-alignment to home-based work

Employer Facilities

Employers are failing to acknowledge sufficiently the impact of dual-career couple situations. In a 1983 USA research survey most employers had no idea how many of their staff were in dual-career family situations yet expected their employees to relocate promptly to service organisational needs. However, companies now exist in Australia to assist **both** adult members of the family unit to resettle.

Employers who cling to outmoded notions of males as breadwinners and females as housewives are causing family problems, according to the director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Dr. Don Edgar:

> Marital stability is affected as people try to juggle housework with inflexible work timetables.
>
> What may surprise many workaholic employers and business executives is the relative importance of family life to their workers.
>
> Much of the benefit of equal opportunity may be lost if barriers such as inadequate child care, fixed working hours and inflexible holiday and leave arrangements remain in place.
>
> If employers provided child care, dependent care, maternity, paternity and family leave and alternative work schedules, they would reap benefits in reduced absenteeism, improved morale and increased productivity.

In New South Wales approximately 40% of women hold paid jobs and, of them about 25% have children under 12 years old. For the families represented here, a number of options are available:

- One parent leaves the work force
- One or both parents reduce hours worked, or become shift workers
- A full-time nanny/housekeeper is hired
- Family care is arranged
- Child is placed in a private child-care centre
- Child is placed in a community/public child-care centre

An employer has a number of options regarding employees who have young children:

- Ignore the fact—'their personal life is their business'. This is by far the most common approach in Australia, but may

in fact be costing companies a substantial amount in terms of absenteeism, 'sickies' to care for a sick child, staff turnover, etc.

- Arrange more flexible working hours or job sharing by two people—approaches which minimise the problem

- Lease spaces in a private child-care centre. However, the Fringe Benefits Tax is applicable in this case, making it an unattractive option for organisations. Tricia Dawson, Managing Director of Chester House Child Care Services, sees this as an answer to the demand pressure on community and government-funded centres

- Provide work-based child care. Two Australian companies have set up completely autonomous child care. Esso and Lend Lease have joined to build and staff a centre for their employees. Companies in America have found a 75% decrease in absenteeism since introducing work-based child care. Staff stayed at their jobs longer, resisted attractive head-hunting offers, took less sick leave and were more likely to return after maternity leave when the employer provided child care

To facilitate home management help, a claim for **paternity** leave has recently been lodged with the Federal Arbitration Commission. Requested provisions in the case include 52 weeks unpaid leave for fathers after the birth; up to three weeks of that leave available immediately after the birth (short paternity leave) and the remainder of that time available at the employee's choice (i.e. extended paternity leave). If men share in family responsibilities they are helping to provide equal opportunity for women in the work force. Major benefits could include allowing men to get to know their children better, as well as the benefits to the children and society.

Many dual-career partners have both young children and older parents counting on them for support. Assistance programs can be designed by employers to help cater for both needs.

Business and professional organisations need to recognise that those employees who are satisfied with their non-work life are a much better investment. They thus need to examine existing personnel policies and procedures in terms of how they mesh with or impede a dual-career family lifestyle.

SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR DUAL-CAREER COUPLES

For those who put a premium on worklife achievement, training in career management and career path planning is essential. Anticipating career blockages and coping with or avoiding plateaux, self-preservation skills amidst office politics are subjects deserving study. While career management is about risk taking, the art is knowing what risks are worth taking.

Some women dislike competition and, preferring to be liked rather than to succeed, stay frustrated in the non-competitive role of care-giver in the home. For them, skills-building training in overcoming shyness, increasing awareness of self-worth and in the use of appropriate assertion techniques can often be the necessary impetus which enables them to reach out for their own individuality and participate in the work force and its challenges.

Taking Action — Importance of Goal Clarity

The impact of clear goals on dual-career family members is significant. Health, happiness and income are strong reasons for striving for and working hard to clarify why each is pursuing a career. Another reason is the usefulness of clear goals in developing cooperative and constructive relationships between the individuals. The clearer the goals, the stronger the motivation to make it work. Energy is more productively focused.

A goal is something desirable and worth working for. With mutually established goals there are benefits in self-satisfaction, personal growth and collaboration with others. Writing down those goals, setting schedules and discussing them all contribute to their attainment and the development of support from each other.

Setting clear goals among dual-career couples means you are both setting out to exercise more control over the direction of your lives, improving abilities to foresee the future, increasing tolerance for new situations, and extending the capacity for both to become the selfs you truly are. My **Worklife** Series publication, *Planning For Me! Setting Personal Goals* has helped many with this important aspect of self-management and partner relationship improvement.

Knowing how to plan ahead sets a dual-career relationship on a less precarious path and reduces the likelihood of the threatening conflict of partners' opposing needs. This is where career development counselling can be of value.

Counselling Help

The benefits an individual might experience as a result of career development counselling are many.

Whether your original choice of career was sound or haphazard, circumstances and needs can change in respect of either yourself or the world of work. This may leave you uncertain as to the direction to take. If you are unemployed, decisions and consequent actions can be extremely important, for good or ill. If you are employed, it is desirable that career decisions and actions be taken as far as possible by you yourself (e.g. whether or not to remain your current employer). Counselling can equip you to make choices and decisions on a rational basis and allow you the best chance of success.

With women, a counsellor needs to explore the client's perceptions of 'appropriate' sex-role behaviour and how these have influenced career actions to date. What messages does the female client carry about appropriate sex-role behaviour related to career? To what extent is occupational stereotyping influencing career preferences? What types of occupational role models have been available and how have they influenced her?

A counsellor can help identify and deal with barriers to implementing family-career plans. Barriers may be within the individuals involved, within their family, within their employment situation, or within the community. When barriers are identified, counselling experiences can be helpful both in reducing individual conflicts and in increasing understanding and cooperation within the family. Barriers within the employment situation can be reduced through strategies evolved by evaluating both career and family situations and their variables.

Many strategies are available to moderate role demands. These include, for example, timing, negotiation and accommodating others. Redefining standards of desirable and expected

performance for career and family feature here, thus freeing energy and time to deal with both roles.

Many have felt the pain of competition between career and family roles but few seek assistance of this nature when clarifying the conflicts and developing goals that are personally satisfying and mutually supportive to other family members.

A counsellor aims not to provide advice in a prescriptive way, but rather to lead both male and female clients to their own conclusions, principally by asking the relevant questions. The client's family background is considered, along with academic record, spare-time interests, present circumstances, health and disposition. The aim is to identify the limiting factors in each of these areas which may shape one's career choice and progress, and these factors may be expressed as a 'career specification'. This specification lists the characteristics the client hopes to find (or, indeed, to avoid) in their career, and is determined mainly by preferences, aversions, strengths and limitations identifiable in other areas of their lives.

The approach places the responsibility squarely on the client to choose, plan and act in respect of their own career.

Planning is particularly essential where dual careers are invested in a family business. To run one successfully demands planning for the day when the very success of it means a change in its character. One or both partners may re-align their careers elsewhere and become beneficiaries rather than the co-managers of such enterprises.

Communicating With Each Other

One of the most crucial problems facing dual-career couples is the limited opportunity many couples have to be alone together. Even in small businesses managed by couples, while time

together can be high the actual period spent communicating on non work-related issues is usually small.

Time together is important to settle issues which threaten, such as role overload by either party, the practicalities of arranging logistics. It gives an opportunity to review each other's progress towards mutual and individual goals, to discuss strategies for achievement before implementing them and to share the excitement of each other's living. Time is always needed for a cosy conversation and the enjoyment of being together.

If all this were easy there would be no need for me to offer the following advice, gleaned from my work counselling many dual-career couples:

- When debating problems, make sure each person has their say. Don't blow up or walk away before hearing the other's viewpoint.

- Deal with one issue at a time.

- Say something positive during an argument! A simple 'I love you' can diffuse anger.

- It's human nature to reject being told what to do. So aim at mutual problem solving.

- Try to see the situation through the perspective of the other person.

- Share openly your views on what values from the dual-career arrangement each person is or is not obtaining. Emotions must be worked through—not allowed to be bottled up.

These forms of discussion are called mutual mentoring. Here the intellectual, political and emotional aspects of their respective careers are brought together and each helps the other sort out problems, viewpoints, action plans. Each becomes the other's best counsellor, best sounding board and best mentor. It's not enough to come home and just lay one's work anxieties at the feet of the other without expecting, even wanting, to discuss the other's problems of a similar nature.

The dynamics of mutual mentoring are that to succeed there must be time allocated to listen and time to offer ideas and solutions. Knowing when to bring up a work discussion is often a matter of sensitivity. You need to experiment when are the best times for each person. Above all don't give up trying, as helping and sharing about work is an important ingredient in the love relationship of the partnership.

My research reveals that in dual-career situations where the arrangement is pleasing to both partners, it is personally important to the man that his partner develop her own occupational life just as he pursues his own career.

In these days when having a child is a matter of choice and when career participation for both can be more enthralling and demanding than ever before, those who pursue dual-career arrangements need to debate, review goals and plan regularly in order to achieve and resolve a host of conflicting demands.

To keep your desire for fulfilment in a closet, to surrender or subjugate career-related personal growth without discussion denies both people a special enrichment in their partnership. It also denies respect for each other as unique individuals.

Dual-career partnerships are unlikely to be free of tensions but even these can contain excitement as well as difficulty, their resolution providing a feeling of accomplishment, innovation and creativity—as well as relief.

The gain in dual-career partnerships in the 1960s was highlighted in Rapoports' studies as the female's self-realisation, i.e. in terms of the benefit to her. Yet she had to carry much of the extra burden. Today, I suggest, the source of gratification among dual-career partners is more likely to be the encouragement of greater independence and resourcefulness in their children by their example.

Self-Marketing

Our social and commercial environment features a high marketing and advertising orientation. To maximise personal rights to a fair financial return on skills, dual-career partners need to develop their ability to present their attributes to their employers in an impressive, persuasive manner. One partner

may be more effective than the other at self-marketing to the best overall employment opportunity. They should share these techniques openly and evolve strategies through discussion in preparation for impending career advancement opportunities. An example is in helping each other with the design, style and content of an interest-arousing résumé.

Job seeking with or outside one's current employer is now a sophisticated art which needs inclination, time allocation and practice to study and develop the necessary skills.

What I have found to be the reward for dual-career partners who set out to acquire these skills, is not only an alternate lifestyle but also a different way of looking at the human enterprise of living.

Vicarious gratification can be derived from the partner's achievements while striving for and achieving one's own. Dual careers do offer two sources of career satisfaction for each person.

Example To Children

Through making choices, establishing and managing dual careers it can be argued that you have created a new development world for your children. Where both parents work and the home management and timetable is consequently adjusted, a child is introduced to the real world at an early point in their development cycle.

Social changes are occurring to accommodate the needs of families in the family-career connection. There is no research evidence suggesting that mother's or father's employment has a more negative effect on sons than on daughters. There is growing evidence that career role models in our parents do have an effect on our own career-related decisions. Some argue that daughters of working mothers have a higher career orientation than daughters of full-time home makers. However, these findings are tempered by the perceived satisfaction level of the mother in the role she chooses.

The important point is that, whichever parent works or when both work, their children are able to hear and observe positive indicators of the value placed on meaningful work in the lives of their role model(s).

The children's developmental possibilities and preparation for an independent adult life can be viewed as well worth the struggles faced in pursuing dual careers.

Whether a parent or not, your partner doesn't have to be the centre, or total focus, of your life but the quality of such a relationship is undoubtedly a key to happiness. Dual-career arrangements require special effort in communication between partners and frequent resolution of conflicting demands that threaten their success.

Recipe for Success in Dual Career Couples

Effective dual-career partnerships are more likely when:

- Partners see their partnership characteristics as a balance, mutually enhancing
- Neither sees the other as being in the service of the partner
- An understanding is worked out about what sort of balance of achievement is tolerable
- It is personally important to one that the other develop an occupational life (i.e. an emotional investment)
- In situations of conflicting demands, the advantages/ disadvantages are considered for the family as a whole
- A strategy is evolved that allows for each partner's development while both strive for an equitable balance of strains and gains
- The arrival of the first child is well coped with as a pivotal point in the dual-career commitment

The greatest threat to their success remains the fact that the concept of domestic back-up continues to be primarily female in its cultural definition. We are still far from equality in the sharing of household chores. Only when this takes place will male-female distinctions and expectations become less emphasised.

DISCUSSION TOPICS BETWEEN DUAL-CAREER PARTNERS

- How does each person benefit from working
- Separate or different vacation times
- Job or education sacrifices by one partner when the other's career requires relocation
- Responsibility for child rearing from infancy to age eighteen
- The need for one partner to be out of town for business travel or conference attendance
- Salary and earnings disparities
- Routine household and special occasion money management techniques

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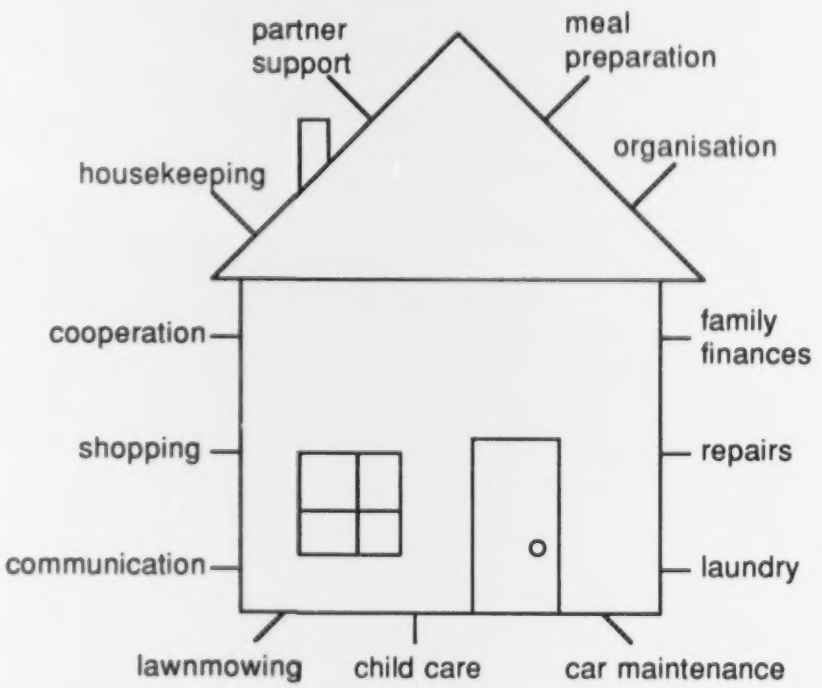
Also, use as discussion points with your partner, your responses as to whether you agree or disagree with the following:

- Responsibility to care for sick child should be borne by each equally
- Each partner has the option to have professional friends who are not necessarily friends of the partner
- Each partner should use the last name that is satisfactory to him or her
- Dual-career couples should not plan for major progress in their career at the same times
- Career conflict is a problem for most dual-career partnerships who truly love each other
- The rewards of dual-career couples invariably outweigh the frustrations
- There are few forums/workshops available to help dual-career couples resolve conflicts between both their career demands

- Career development for dual-career couples does not proceed at a similar pace
- It is not advisable for dual-career couples to work for the same organisation
- Dual-career partnerships do not lead to more separations and divorces
- Work relationships are taking precedence over home relationships
- Your concern for your partner's career extends beyond the remuneration it brings

Both partners to a dual-career arrangement should write the percentage of time each contributes to each of the following features of home management...and then compare and discuss the results!



RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

1. Partnership Perspective

Balancing Home and Career: Skills for Successful Life Management, Pam Conrad, Crisp Publications, USA, 1986 (distributed in Australia by Prime Learning, Tel: (07) 841.1061)

Dual Career Families: Implications for Organisations and Counsellors, Sekaran, V., Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1986

Dual Career Families Re-examined, Rhonda and Robert Rapoport, Harper Row, New York, 1983

Families and Work, edited by Naomi Gerstel and Harriet Engel Gross, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1987

How to Live Separate Together: A Guide for Working Couples, Dick Irish, Doubleday, New York, 1981

Job Satisfaction in Professional Dual-Career Couples: Psychological & Socioeconomic Variables, H Klein, Journal of Vocational Behavior, Vol 32, No 3, June 1988, p 255, Academic Press Inc., USA

More Equal Than Others: Women and Men in Dual-Career Marriages, Rosanna Hertz, University of California Press, Berkeley, California, 1986

Planning Your Future: A Workbook for Personal Goal Setting, G Ford and G Lippitt, University Associates, USA (distributed in Australia by Prime Learning, Tel: (07) 841.1061)

Spouse, Parent, Worker: On Gender and Multiple Roles, edited by Fay J Crosby, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1987

Successful Women, Angry Men, Bebe Moore Campbell, Arrow Books Ltd, London 1988

The Two-Boss Business: Joys and Pitfalls of Working and Living Together and Still Remaining Friends, Elyse and Mike Sommer, Books Unlimited, 1986

The Two Career Couple, Hall F.S. and Hall D.T., Addison-Wesley, Reading, Mass. 1979

Working Together: Entrepreneurial Couples, Frank and Sharan Barnett, Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, California, 1988

2. Female Perspective

Managing Success: High-Echelon Careers and Motherhood, Aasta S Lubin, Columbia University Press, New York, 1987

Paths to Power: A Woman's Guide, Nastasha Jose Fowitz, Addison-Wesley, New York, 1980

Pregnant While You Work: A Practical Guide to Having Both, Wenda Morrone, Fontana/Collins, Auckland, 1984

Remaking Motherhood: How Working Mothers are Shaping Our Children's Future, Anita Shreve, Viking Press, New York, 1987

Second Chance: Women Returning to Study, Joan Martin, Penguin, Melbourne, 1988

Tender Power, Sherry S Cohen, New York, 1989

The Compleat Woman—Marriage, Motherhood, Career: Can She Have It All? Valerie Grove, Hogarth Press, 1988

The Prize and the Price: The Changing World of Women who return to study, Susan Kelly, Methuen, Sydney, 1987

The Woman Who Works , The Parent Who Cares, Dr Sirgay Sanger and John Kelly, Bantam Press, USA, 1989

Women and Home-Based Work, Kathleen Christensen, Henry Holt & Co, USA, 1988

Women of a Certain Age—The Midlife Search for Self, Lillian B Rubin, Harper, New York, 1981

3. Male Perspective

How to Live with a Working Wife, Jim Douglas, Pan Books, London, 1983

Men in Dual Career Families : Current Realities and Future Prospects, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. Jersey

4. Child Care in Australia

Such Sweet Sorrow, A Practical and Personal Guide to Child Care in Australia, Rosemary Lever, Greenhouse, Melbourne, 1988

ALSO BY PAUL STEVENS

PLANNING FOR ME! Setting Personal Goals

Planning For Me! is a workbook which incorporates self-directed learning and questionnaires. It can form the basis of a training module within a Career Development or Life Planning course or can be used by individuals working alone. It is is designed for those who have a desire for quality, not just quantity, as a goal in life. It helps combat the feeling of powerlessness that you can easily feel over the direction of life's journey. The contents help develop skills in life planning. In the process you will grow in self-confidence and learn to appreciate the pleasure of using personal power in constructive ways. The work you are asked to do is exacting. At the same time, you will find it challenging, fun, helpful and revealing.

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An Explanation — Worklife

The Centre for Worklife Counselling often provokes comment about its name. The term Worklife was chosen to reflect our continuing work in research, counselling, training and publishing material which relates to improving people's enjoyment from their employment activities **and other aspects of their lives**. We do not accept the traditional view of career counselling—that is, to help people acquire satisfaction only from their working hours. We consider that occupational satisfaction can only occur when a person's total needs are included in the assessment of what is lacking and what needs to be done to increase inner well being, improved relationships with others, and effective performance both at work and non-work activities. Ours is a holistic approach—we try to consider all features of a person at the same time as maintaining a respect for personal privacy by the use of non-threatening inquiries into thoughts and circumstances.

About the Author

After twenty years' employment experience dealing with the problems of employer/employee in the UK, Canada and Australia, Paul Stevens' concern for individuals and their search for satisfaction in work motivates his daily activities and his writing. Paul has a deep understanding of the realities of organisation life and people's needs, and of the factors, practical and emotional, which influence the way decisions are made about careers and worklife issues. His involvement in counselling clients, supervisors and employees during his personnel management career and now in his counselling activities during the past ten years makes his advice extremely practical. His experience is backed by studies at universities in Industrial Psychology and Business Administration.

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Helping Your Child Choose a Career
Career Transitions: A Guide for Counsellors, Trainers and Employers
The Australian Résumé Guide

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